



DECEMBER THEME

UNBOXED
Find the Joy

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 2:1-12

Led by the Light | The Wise Men Visit Jesus

Spark Story Bible, pg. 218-223
Wise Men

BOTTOM LINE

You can have joy when you search for God

MEMORY VERSE

“Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!”
Philippians 4:4 NIV

LIFE APP

Joy | Finding a way to be happy, even when things don't go your way

BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice and with God's help...I can!

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **JOY** and God's character, as shown through God's big story.

Key Question: How can you find joy all year long? Joy isn't something we can only find during the Christmas season. God offers joy to us each and every day. Sometimes we just aren't sure where to start. We pray that families discover how they can choose joy as they grow in their relationship with Jesus.

In **Matthew 2:1-12**, we see how the announcement of Jesus' birth was far-reaching. Wise men from the East saw a star that set them on an adventure to find a promised King of Israel. When they finally found Jesus, they worshiped him as king. God protected Jesus and the Wise Men from Herod's plot to kill Jesus.

Bottom Line: You can find joy when you search for God. Jesus is the promised One sent from God to show us how to live and love. That story isn't something we can keep to ourselves. It's a story we need to share with everyone.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each group member by name. Ask God to help kids understand that they can keep the joy they feel at Christmas time all year long! Pray that your kids will feel God's presence each and every time they seek God, and that this would bring them joy throughout their lives.

•• **JUST FOR FUN**

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- As kids arrive, ask them to share stories about times when they've lost something. Encourage them to be very detailed in their storytelling. Make sure they include information about the search to find the lost thing. Was the search successful? If so, how did they feel when the lost thing was found?

•• **GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME**

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding



What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Sit together in a circle.
- Instruct kids to create a packing list for a trip. Start by asking them to think about the things they normally take when they go somewhere overnight.
 - For the first round, everybody should come up with and share an item that begins with the first letter of their first name.
 - For the next round, everybody should come up with and share an item that begins with the first letter of their last name.
 - If you have time for a third round, have kids come up with items in alphabetical order. The first person says an “a” word, the second person says a “b” word, etc. You can help each other with the difficult letters, or just skip them altogether.

What You Say: “Packing for a trip is fun as you look forward to going to a new place or visiting friends and family. **[Transition] Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we are going to hear/we heard about three people going on a long journey who packed some pretty unique things to take along with them.”**

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to Fellowship Hall for Children’s Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

●● **TAKE A SNAPSHOT** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: Green paper strips, Red paper strips, pens

What You Do:

- Form groups of two or three kids.
- Give each group a handful of paper strips and a pen.
- Explain that on the green paper strips their team will work together to come up things that help us seek and find God, one thing per green strip of paper (*things like reading the Bible, worship, daily devos, going to camp, coming to Children’s Ministry, etc.*).
- On the red strips of paper, they will list things that stop or slow down our search for God, one thing for each red strip of paper (*things that take our focus away from spending time with God: busy schedules, playing video games instead of talking with God, etc.*).
- Each list can contain actions, attitudes, habits, or anything that influences us to seek after God or turn away from God.
- Bring the groups together and invite them to share their lists.

What You Say: “If you’re searching for God, the Bible is one of the best places to look. The Bible is like a huge, long letter from God. It can help you get to know what God is like and what matters to God. The Bible is filled with stories of others who searched for God and how their lives changed when they found God. You’ll read about God’s love, God’s promises, God’s power, and God’s plans for you. It also helps to spend time at church learning with those who follow Jesus. If you want joy that lasts longer than your Christmas tree, keep searching for God and don’t let anything keep you from finding what you are looking for.”

●● **BIBLE STORY EXTENSION** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Bible



What You Do:

- Read/review today's Bible story in Matthew 2:1-12
- Create two teams and ask the teams to stand in a line facing each other several feet apart.
- Explain that a player from each team at opposite ends of the line will be given a tongue twister that relates to the Bible story.
 - They will then step forward and walk between the lines toward each other while maintaining eye contact and a serious expression.
 - When they meet in the middle, they must stop and repeat their tongue twister five times as fast as they can and then continue walking to the end of their team's line.
 - The goal is to maintain a serious face and not smile or laugh until they are back in line.
 - Whoever fails to do so joins the other team.
- Assign one of the following tongue twisters (*or create others*) to the first players and begin the game.
 - Horrible Herod
 - Follow the Star Far
 - Frankincense is Intense
 - Old Gold Gift Given
 - The More Myrrh the Merrier
 - Wise Guys' Successful Search
 - Worthy of Worship
 - Best Choice...Rejoice!
- Repeat until all of the tongue-twisters have been used. The team with the most players on their side wins.
- Bring the teams together and comment on their efforts. As hard as they tried, no doubt some of the kids couldn't keep from laughing.
- Connect the game with the way God is always at work to bring us joy even on our saddest days and toughest times.
 - Hard situations, difficult people, and problems that don't seem to ever go away can rob us of joy if we don't keep our focus on trusting that God always knows best.
- Read Philippians 4:4 and ask kids to share what it means to "rejoice always."

•• **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Ask the following questions...
 - Why is it important to seek God?
 - What do you learn from the wise men about searching for Jesus?
 - What has God done to seek us out?
 - When we need to find joy, why does it help to seek God?

•• **VERSE TO TAKE WITH YOU** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Bible, large craft stick, markers

What You Do:

- Invite somebody to draw a person on the craft stick. (*A literal "stick figure!"*)
- Sit together in a circle.
- Give the Bible to one group member and the craft stick person to the kid on the opposite side of the circle.
- Signal the kids to begin passing the objects in the same direction as quickly as they can. The goal is to see if one of the objects can catch up to the other. (*The rule is that both objects have to keep moving at the same time. Kids can't simply stop passing one object and*

